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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JUN 1593
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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0017
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4357
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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000419

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2019
TAGS: [ECON](#) [EFIS](#) [ETRD](#) [SENV](#) [XK](#) [XM](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE RESPONSE: WORRISOME SIGNS AS ECUADOR
PREPARES FOR INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION MEETING

REF: A. STATE 55230
[1](#)B. QUITO 18
[1](#)C. 08 STATE 77701

Classified By: DCM Andrew Chritton. Reason: 1.4 b and d.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On June 2, EconOff met with representatives from the Embassy of Japan, the European Commission, and the GOE U/S of Fisheries, Guillermo Moran, to deliver the demarche points in reftel A. As in our previous meeting with Moran (reftel B), he stressed that the GOE wanted the June 8-12 meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) to be successful and promised cooperation. When pressed on details, however, Moran revealed views that could create obstacles to a positive outcome. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Moran was very cordial throughout the meeting and expressed hope for a successful outcome to the June 8-12 IATTC meeting. He expressed disappointment that the November IATTC meeting had not been successful, but was not prepared to accept responsibility for this outcome. Contradicting the information that the Embassy received in reftel C, Moran argued that Ecuador had tried hard to achieve a consensus at the November meeting, but had been unable to accept the proposed &special treatment8 for Colombia. As in our January meeting, Moran said that only a few minor points had remained unresolved at the November meeting and blamed a lack of time and translating resources for the failure.

[1](#)3. (C) EconOff and the Japanese and European representatives pressed Moran for his expectations about what could be achieved at the upcoming meeting. Moran struck an optimistic tone but revealed views that may create problems in the upcoming negotiations. Rather than offering details about a potential agreement, Moran pointed to Ecuador,s voluntary measures such as the use of tuna sorting grids and unilateral fishing moratoriums as evidence that Ecuador was doing its part for the conservation of tuna stocks. He suggested that Ecuador would still be unwilling to accept &special treatment8 for Colombia, and expressed skepticism about the scientific advice recently provided by the IATTC Stock Assessment Working Group. He said that while the IATTC,s Working Group,s recommendation was for a fisheries closure of four months, Ecuador believed that a closure of 59 days was adequate.

[1](#)4. (C) Econoff noted the inadequacy of unilateral measures and inquired about Ecuador,s commitment to achieving an agreement by all IATTC members. Moran stressed that he did hope to achieve an agreement, but said it must be something that Ecuador could live with. He said that while he respected the IATTC Working Group, he felt that its recent

study of tuna stocks was incomplete,⁸ since it did not take into account the state of the fisheries in the Western Pacific managed by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). EconOff suggested that the lack of a comprehensive approach across the oceans should not be used as an excuse for inaction in the areas managed by the IATTC. Moran responded by downplaying the level of seriousness of the situation, saying that while bigeye tuna stocks faced problems, the species was not in danger of extinction. He suggested that Ecuador would be willing to fund additional studies to provide a more complete picture.

15. (C) When pressed to explain why Ecuador could not accept the Working Group's recommendation of a four-month closure, Moran said that it would be too great an economic blow for a developing country like Ecuador. EconOff noted that a collapse of the fishing stocks would pose an even greater economic risk and suggested that the deteriorating situation called for more drastic measures than what Ecuador favored. Moran replied that the proposed 59 day closure plus the voluntary measures were adequate for now. He argued that an agreement along these lines was nearly completed in November, and expressed an unwillingness to start over⁸ with a new proposal for 2009.

Comment

16. (C) Embassy believes that Moran is limited in what he can accept because of economic pressures from Ecuador's tuna industry. Moran expressed continued interest in Ecuador participating in the WCPFC and has previously inquired about

collaboration with NOAA on marine conservation projects. It might be useful to consider non-controversial issues on which the USG could work with Moran to see if those can generate leverage to advance more controversial issues.

HODGES